

4 September 1952.

To: [redacted] Room 1301, "I" Bldg.  
From: [redacted]  
Subj: USSR Area Program - Evaluation of.

1. I am sending herewith evaluations submitted by people in my branch who attended the lectures given in [redacted] during July and August.

2. All present in the Branch were supposed to attend the full course; most did, but absences on vacation or otherwise, and excuses in some cases because of urgency of work causes some to miss portions of the course.

3. In addition, section chiefs from [redacted] attended all but the first few lectures of [redacted] will be sent to you a little later through me.

4. A few general facts on the background of the people who attended the course may assist you to evaluate the evaluations.

5. Those in [redacted] were all intelligence officers, GS-7 and above, with GS-9 predominating. All have been working from current documentary sources (chiefly newspapers and magazines) in Russian (and to a slight extent other foreign languages) on the USSR, with each individual specializing on one subject or related group of subjects, and with the main emphasis in the economic field. About a quarter of the people have advanced degrees, in most cases in a field related to Soviet studies. Five are Russian emigres. About half have been engaged in their present work for two years or more, but in many cases in a rather narrow field. I should say that about half really needed a ~~basism~~ foundation course on the Soviet Union in the three fields covered.

6. The ~~am~~ people from [redacted] in the main specialize not functionally but geographically, each having over-all responsibility for a Soviet satellite country.

7. Some of the evaluations enclosed are frank in their criticism, a few almost to the point of harshness. However, in general I know that we are grateful for having had the opportunity to attend the course, derived considerable benefit from it, and recognize that some of the defects were unavoidable due to the situation and that others required this first trial to be disclosed. We appreciate the readiness of the Office of Training to receive our criticisms.

7. I am attaching my own evaluation to the others.

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4. Do you approve of the policy that students not be required to do collateral reading or prepare papers, or do you think it would be both reasonable and useful if students expected to do limited reading and preparation of papers?

In addition to your remarks on the above points, any other comments or suggestions that you may wish to contribute for improvement of future related programs will be appreciated.

Please forward your written comments to [ ] Room 1301, "I" 25X1 Building as early as possible.

1. I believe that an area study program, if properly arranged, can be extremely effective in assisting the analyst in his work. Such study will give him better understanding of the background of current events and their relation to past occurrences; it will also permit him to make better comments and evaluations of a given situation.

2. The program in question was a very helpful refresher course in Soviet history, economy and international relations and quite stimulating for further research and study of problems discussed.

3a. I consider the subjects and scope of problems discussed during the given course most relevant to the normal work of the branch. It is quite obvious that the degree of familiarity with the subjects of the attending analysts varied. Nevertheless, everybody could learn some interesting details and facts previously unknown to him. It is self evident that the courses could not be trimmed to satisfy the individual requirements of each analyst, but had to fit the educational level and interests of the majority of the students. In this respect the scope of the courses was satisfactory.

3b. In general, the manner and method of presentation was quite interesting. The following criticism, however, can be advanced as to the individual courses:

25X1 [ ] approach and comments on some the important historical and cultural developments in pre-war Russia and the USSR was, to a certain extent, too dogmatic, sometimes idealistic, naive, and disregarding existing realities. The average analyst, on the basis of his every day work, had necessarily to draw more realistic conclusions with regard to the behavior and activities of Soviet leaders and Soviet policy, than the presentation of [ ] seemed to indicate.

25X1 [ ] on the other hand, had a far more realistic approach to events in Soviet Russia. He showed a great insight in Soviet attitudes and was quite familiar with political problems that the analysts encounter in their every day work. He was, however, in his presentation ~~very~~ at times

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dry, a little too scholarly and not always managed to hold the attention of the audience.

25X1

[ ] placed too much emphasis on economic ~~events~~ developments in the US (which were supposed to be known to the students) and too little on recent economic changes in the USSR. He had a tendency to overcrowd the listeners with a mass of data and details and to overlook the general picture. I believe that because of this the presentation was at times confusing for the listeners. It also seems to me that the lecturer should try to capture the attention to the audience by inserting an occasional joke or remark regarding current events.

3c. Time allotted for the course in Soviet politics should have been extended by two weeks. The period of two hours was satisfactory

3d. I consider discussion quite helpful for proper understanding of the ~~discuss~~ problems involved and for forming conclusions with regard to analyzed subject matters. I would therefore suggest that within the allotted time limit certain periods should be entirely devoted to discussion.

4. The courses should serve as a stimulant for further study and to broaden the interests of the students. The ~~the~~ students should not, however, be required to prepare papers which would tend to make the courses compulsory and thus defeat their initial purpose.